

DALE FARM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

copy

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RE: DALE FARM EVICTION

15 February 2010

Dear Yvonne,

May I remind you that we wrote to you last month requesting a meeting with members of the EPA.

On the 10 December 2009 Basildon District Council engaged the Gypsy eviction specialists Constant & Co to carry out what will be the biggest enforcement operation against an ethnic community every carried out in modern times in this county.

The Traveller families being targeted at Dale Farm, Crays Hill, feel this is a deliberate act of ethnic-cleansing. However much authorities may explain to us that it arises through planning regulations, that impression unfortunately cannot be erased.

Numbers of Gypsy organizations have been involved in recent years in diversity training involving local police forces in several counties, including Kent and Sussex.

We are receiving feed back that some senior police officers are concerned that should this huge anti-Traveller operation go ahead as planned, without the 90 families involved being driven out on the road (most likely into another county), it will have a very negative effect on community relations.

This is something which is also causing concern to the Commission on Equality and Human Rights, which has expressed this view on several occasions to Basildon Council.

The Children's Commission has written to the BDC requesting assurances over the safety of children and their future.

The danger is that much of the progress made through diversity training and new contacts between police forces and the Gypsy community will be undone at one swipe.

It is well documented that in the past Constant & Co have ignored health and safety regulations. We have evidence of racial abuse being used by bailiffs, children being put in danger and much private property needlessly destroyed.

A 25-page dossier is available outlining the complaints against Constant. We will bring copies to the meeting for members. Most seriously, Constant was the subject of severe criticism by a High Court judge in 2005.

As you can appreciate, the breaking of the law by bailiffs who have been engaged to enforce the law (in what we view as a disproportionate action to evict families from their own land) can only set an extremely bad example of local council and police conduct, which will impact on a whole new generation of young Travellers, who have been settled for up to ten years and going to school.

Our purpose in meeting with you is to highlight to EPA members the need to have police officers attending such evictions fully aware of health and safety law; and to request that they enforce compliance with that law by the bailiff company, as agents of the local authority.

Please will you now take up the matter and suggest a date and time for a meeting in March convenient to your members.

Yours sincerely,

Grattan Puxon
secretary
Dale Farm Housing Association